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US Department of the Interior News Briefing



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- U.S. News & World Report: Sensors Deployed To Measure Effects Of Jose On New England.

- St. Paul (MN) Pioneer Press: Frogs In Minnesota, Across U.S. Dying Of Little-known Disease, Scientists Find.
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- ABC: Media Analyses: Mueller's Latest Steps Indicate Trump Himself Under Scrutiny.
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- Politico: Politico Analysis: Senate GOP Will Not "Fall In Line Behind" Trump's Tax Plan.
- USA Today: Fed Leaves Rates Unchanged, Says It Will Reduce Its Bond Holdings.

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DOI In The News

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke Swims With The Sharks At Wonders Of Wildlife.

The [Springfield \(MO\) News-Leader](#) (9/20, Zhu) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke "went scuba diving with sharks Wednesday at Wonders of Wildlife." Zinke also "fielded questions from more than 40 students seated in front of the tank." Zinke encouraged the group of fifth-grade students "to continue learning about and practicing conservation." He said, "I've been to 60 or 70 countries and nobody has the treasures that we have here in the United States. We should be proud."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Springfield \(MO\) News-Leader](#) (9/20, Johnson, Schmitt), the [Springfield \(MO\) News-Leader](#) (9/20), the [Springfield \(MO\) News-Leader](#) (9/20), [KTTS-AM](#) Springfield, MO (9/21, Snider), and [KOLR-TV](#) Springfield, MO (9/20, Lingo).

Western Lawmakers: Wildfire Funding Fix Needs To Be Top Priority.

[KTVZ-TV](#) Bend, OR (9/20) reports that a bipartisan group of Western lawmakers have introduced "an updated version of their bipartisan wildfire funding solution that would protect desperately needed funding for fire prevention and treat wildfires as the natural disasters they are." The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act of 2017 would "end the destructive cycle of borrowing from fire prevention accounts to put out fires and stop the erosion of the Forest Service's budget by reforming the way the federal government funds wildfires." The legislation "would fund wildfires as natural disasters and protect the agencies' fire prevention budgets by putting a freeze on the rising budget costs of the 10-year average." It would also "end 'fire borrowing'" by allowing the agencies to fund any fire suppression spending needed above the frozen average through disaster funding just like other agencies can access disaster funding for tornadoes, hurricanes and floods."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Idaho Falls \(ID\) Post Register](#) (9/20, Clark) and

[KMGH-TV](#) Denver (9/20, Miller).

Lawmaker Laments Forest Management In Wake Of Brian Head Fire. The [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (9/20, O'Donoghue) reports that "environmental groups launched legal assaults decades ago to protect forests from timber harvests but instead transformed them into tinderboxes, a group of critics charged Wednesday." In a video that will be presented to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Purdue, Rep. Mike Noel and "others blasted failed management practices of federal agencies held hostage to lawsuits and protests by environmental groups." The video, which was produced under the direction of Noel, "debuted before the Legislature's Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment Interim Committee, featuring retired foresters."

The American West Is Burning. In a [Washington Post](#) (9/20) op-ed, Sen. Steve Daines writes that environmental lawsuits and excessive regulations "have become barriers to responsible forest management" in the western United States, costing states millions of acres of land lost to forest fires that could have been better contained. Daines argues that forest management reforms should be passed, certain environmental rules should be cut, and the Forest Service budget should be maintained.

Democrat Raises Concerns Over Accuracy Of Zinke's Report.

[Politico Morning Energy](#) (9/20, Adragna) reports that a BLM official said during an Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing Tuesday that "the agency did not fact check Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's report on national monuments before it went to the White House for review." Sen. Martin Heinrich "originally raised questions about 'more than a few simple factual errors included' in Zinke's analysis." John Ruhs, BLM's acting deputy director of operations, "then said his agency was 'not part of the writing of the reports' but 'did answer questions and provide data as necessary.'"

Memo: Consider Civil Rights Home For National Monument.

The [AP](#) (9/20, Pettus) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke suggested in a leaked memo to President Trump that "Mississippi civil rights sites, including the home of slain leader Medgar Evers, should be considered for national monument designation." In February, the National Park Service designated the Evers home a national historic landmark. According to the article, "if the modest ranch-style home becomes a national monument, the federal government will take it over from Tougaloo College, bringing more money for preservation."

Frustrated Tribal Leaders Wonder If Bears Ears Is A National Monument In Name Only.

The [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (9/20, Maffly) reports that "nine months after President Barack Obama enshrined the 1.3 million acres encircling Utah's Bears Ears Buttes as a protected landscape, federal agencies have done little to manage the lands as outlined in the monument proclamation." The Bureau of Land Management and Manti-La Sal National Forest have "moved to protect high-visibility archaeological sites, but planning efforts remain stuck in limbo while uncertainty surrounding the monument's future persists." The article says that "under pressure from local and state officials, the BLM has suspended all management planning, drawing the ire of tribal governments that sought the monument designation under the Antiquities Act."

VA, Interior Detail Workforce Reductions And Consolidations Under Gov't Reorganization.

[Federal News Radio \(DC\)](#) (9/20, Ogrysko) reports that "lawmakers interested in moving some federal entities out of the Washington, D.C. area may already get their wish — without much heated public debate." The departments of Veterans Affairs and Interior are "already moving some federal employees with customer-facing jobs out of D.C. and to consolidated offices in the field." The article says that "many of the Interior Department's proposed actions for reorganization will require congressional approval, but the agency also sees employee reassessments and relocations as a key aspect of its plan." Interior has "asked the Office of Personnel Management and OMB for a 'very broad' VERA/VSIP authority in effort to shrink the size of its workforce and move more people from their positions in Washington out to field offices."

Agencies Steer Clear Of RIFs In Reorg Plans.

[Federal Computer Week](#) (9/20, Gunter) reports that "agencies say they can meet White House government reorganization principles and fall in line with their fiscal year 2018 budgets by reducing the workforce through attrition and reclassifying employees, rather than layoffs." Raymond Limon, deputy chief human capital officer at the Interior Department, "said his agency

isn't going into the reorganization with the mindset of cutting personnel, 'but we're always going to work to our budget, no doubt about it.'" He said, "Numerically, we don't have necessarily have a target, but it's kind of that expectation that if work can be performed in the field, we should do it."

Op-ed: The Antiquities Act Is An Antiquity Itself.

In an op-ed for the [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (9/20, Lofthouse), Jordan Lofthouse, a Ph.D. fellow at Strata, argues that the Antiquities Act and national monuments, "often serve as political tools for presidents to accomplish their selfish goals, and not as a mechanism to protect and conserve the land." According to Lofthouse, the Trump Administration's "national monument review and the decisions that will come from it are excellent opportunities to evaluate how much power the president has under the Antiquities Act and analyze when and why he uses that power." Lofthouse suggests that "it may be time to retire the Antiquities Act and allow Congress to fulfill its constitutional duty of managing federal lands."

Jay Evensen: Why A Trump 'Bears Ears' Decision Won't Be The Last Word.

In his column for the [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (9/20, Evensen), Jay Evensen writes that the problem with the Antiquities Act is that it "gives one politician, the president, unfettered power." Evensen points out that "whether it's Obama declaring 1.35 million acres or Trump declaring something much less, it is still one man making a declaration." Evensen suggests amending the Antiquities Act "to require Congress to ratify or alter a president's action after a period of time." He believes that "only a compromise, passed by the people's representatives through a deliberative process, can put these land issues to rest for good."

Monuments In Danger.

The [Eugene \(OR\) Register-Guard](#) (9/20) editorializes that "news that the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon is one of four being targeted for reduction by the Trump administration is bad news not just for Oregonians, but for Americans beyond the state's borders." The paper claims that "by proposing major reductions in national monuments across the country," Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is "prioritizing the few over the many." The editorial asserts that "national monument status is intended to protect and preserve special places that have value for all Americans." But "removing existing protections for these lands for the financial profit of the few, such as miners and logging companies, is shortsighted."

Bureau Of Indian Affairs

House Panel To Take Up Lumbee Recognition.

The [St. Pauls \(NC\) Review](#) (9/20) reports that "the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs has scheduled a Tuesday hearing on Lumbee Recognition Act." The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Robert Pittenger, "would grant the Lumbee Tribe full federal recognition." Pittenger said, "This is the next step in bringing Lumbee recognition up for a vote. The Lumbee Tribe has sought full federal recognition since 1888. We are working closely with the Lumbee Tribe and other leaders to ensure a strong showing next Tuesday."

Also reporting are [Robesonian \(NC\)](#) (9/20, Shiles) and the [Cherokee \(NC\) One Feather](#) (9/20, SCOTT MCKIE B.P.).

Letter From Indian Gaming Regulators Clouds Future Of East Windsor Casino.

The [Hartford \(CT\) Courant](#) (9/19, Gosselin) reports that Bureau of Indian Affairs regulators have "thrown a potential roadblock in front of opening the state's first casino off tribal lands, and questions are being raised about just how quickly expansion might get underway." According to the article, "the state law enacted this year that allows the tribal operators of Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun to jointly open a satellite casino in East Windsor required federal approvals that the revenue-sharing agreements with the state wouldn't be affected by the new casino agreement." Previously, the Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot tribes had "produced letters of non-binding guidance from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs throughout a series of legislative hearings on the East Windsor casino." The bureau "indicated it didn't anticipate problems, but when the BIA's letter was issued Friday, it didn't explicitly approve or disapprove."

Additional coverage was provided by the [New London \(CT\) Day](#) (9/20, Hallenbeck).

FBI, BIA Investigating Alleged Lame Deer Assault.

The [Billings \(MT\) Gazette](#) (9/20) reports that "the FBI and Bureau of Indian Affairs responded Sunday morning to a report of a Lame Deer man who had been assaulted and was unresponsive, according to a press release issued Wednesday by FBI spokesman Travis Burrows."

Bureau Of Land Management

Climate Change Ruling Could Affect Other Fossil Fuel Projects.

[Bloomberg BNA](#) (9/21) reports that energy experts say the decision by an appeals court ordering the federal government to "rethink the climate change impacts of two giant coal mines" establishes "an argument that could be tested nationwide in other courts to challenge any fossil fuel-related project that might have climate change effects." Although the order applied to a pair of Wyoming coal mines, experts say natural gas pipelines, oil sand pipelines, coal railroads, and coal export terminals could all face renewed scrutiny in the future.

Settlement In The Works To End Red River Land Dispute.

The [Wichita Falls \(TX\) Times Record News](#) (9/20, Ingle) reports that "after years of back and forth over who owns what land in a 116-mile stretch of the Red River, it appears a settlement is in the works to end the land dispute roughly a week before a trial was to begin." The article points to an entry in the Public Access to Court Electronic Records, or PACER, system on Wednesday, which notified that "the bench trial of Aderholt et al v. Bureau of Land Management et al has been canceled pending a settlement between the plaintiffs and the defendants."

SunZia Transmission Project Moves To Pre-construction Phase.

The [San Pedro Valley \(AZ\) News-Sun](#) (9/20, Neff) reports that SouthWestern Power Group, which is "planning to build two high voltage transmission lines across southeast Arizona that will end near the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station," has begun "securing right-of-way leases in Cochise, Graham, and Greenlee counties." When complete, the "SunZia Southwest Transmission Project will stretch more than 515 miles, enabling New Mexico wind energy to become electricity in California." The U.S. Bureau of Land Management "recently signed agreements allowing SunZia to be built across 50 miles of federal lands in Arizona and 134 miles in New Mexico."

Bureau Of Land Management To Build Parking For Sutey Ranch.

The [Aspen Public Radio \(CO\)](#) (9/20, Stewart-Severy) reports that "hikers and hunters will soon be able to access public land acquired in a controversial land exchange earlier this year." The Bureau of Land Management is "scheduled to start construction this week of a small parking area at the entrance to Sutey Ranch outside of Carbondale." Sutey Ranch was "part of a land exchange with billionaire Leslie Wexner."

Conservation Group Opposes Development In Red Desert.

[Wyoming Public Radio](#) (9/20, McKim) reports that the Wilderness Society has "designated the northern Red Desert as one of 15 wildland areas most at-risk of energy development on public lands." The Red Desert is "home to several hundred wildlife species and numerous wilderness study areas, and up till now, has avoided significant energy development." However, the Bureau of Land Management is "reconsidering its management plan, which could result in renewed oil and gas drilling." The Wilderness Society is "hoping to prevent that by emphasizing the area's ecological, economic and cultural importance."

Long Island Advocates Urge Congress To Spare Wild Horses.

The [Long Island \(NY\) Press](#) (9/20, Bolger) reports that CANA Foundation, a nonprofit horse rescue group, is "calling on Congressional lawmakers to drop a controversial proposal that would authorize euthanizing thousands of mustangs that were rounded up on federal land in the West." The group "condemned the proposal as inhumane." Rep. Tom Suozzi, speaking at "a news conference Tuesday outside CANA's stable of 12 rescued horses before riding off on one," said "he is exploring how to block the proposal in Congress, where the Republican majority has advanced the measure."

Unadopted Devil's Garden Wild Horses To Return To Territory.

The [Klamath Falls \(OR\) Herald And News](#) (9/20) reports that "one year ago the Modoc National

Forest conducted the first wild horse gather in more than 10 years from the Devil's Garden Plateau Wild Horse Territory." According to the article, "two hundred and twenty one horses were sent to the BLM Litchfield holding facility from tribal and private lands near the territory." The Modoc Mustang Training Program "developed by volunteers, partners and employees in the spring of 2017 has led to 41 adoptions with 19 additional horses still in training." The article says that "horses not yet adopted or otherwise placed for training are scheduled to be returned to the territory after the agreed-upon holding period ends Sept. 25."

BLM Reopens Helena's North Hills To Shooting.

The [Helena \(MT\) Independent Record](#) (9/20) reports that the Bureau of Land Management is "reopening Helena's North Hills to shooting as fire danger decreases." The BLM had "temporarily closed its public lands in the North Hills to recreational shooting in July due to hot weather conditions and a shooting-related fire that started in the area over the July Fourth holiday." The bureau "lifted the order at 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 19."

Let's Balance Wilderness And Recreation.

In an op-ed for the [Jackson Hole \(WY\) News & Guide](#) (9/20, Combs), Jesse Combs, president of Advocates for Multi-Use of Public Lands (AMPL), writes that that AMPL was formed, in part, "in response to the Wyoming County Commissioners Association's decision to develop the Wyoming Public Lands Initiative, which seeks to advance federal legislation that will remove some of Wyoming's wilderness study areas from limbo by designating them as wilderness or returning them to regular management by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management." Combs hopes the Wyoming Public Lands Initiative "can offer our communities an opportunity for input and local control over the fate of recreation on public lands in our area." He sees the Wyoming Public Lands Initiative as "an opportunity for all the stakeholders and community members engaged to leave a legacy of stewardship and an enduring invitation for future generations to connect to the natural wonders that are all around us."

Bureau Of Reclamation

Delta Tunnels Project Imperiled After Westlands Rejection.

The [Sacramento \(CA\) Bee](#) (9/21, Kasler, Saballow) reports that "shellshocked by an influential farm irrigation district's refusal to help pay for the Delta tunnels, advocates of the \$17.1-billion project were scrambling Wednesday to salvage it or conjure up a Plan B." According to the article, "three possible options were floated by California water policymakers for reviving the proposal." However, "all of them face substantial hurdles of their own."

The [Sacramento \(CA\) Bee](#) (9/20) editorializes that "without some version of the California WaterFix, the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, a rich and vastly re-engineered resource, will continue to decline and diminishing fisheries will dwindle further." It urges California Gov. Jerry Brown to "look for alternatives."

Bureau Of Safety And Environmental Enforcement

Additional Coverage: Forget 'Energy Independent,' US Should Seek 'Dominance'.

Additional coverage of Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement director Scott Angelle's remarks to the Louisiana Oil & Gas Association on Tuesday was provided by the [Baton Rouge \(LA\) Business Report](#) (9/20).

Fish And Wildlife Service

Interior Official Says Trump Administration Has The 'Guts' To Allow Oil Exploration In ANWR.

The [Alaska Public Radio Network](#) (9/20, Harball) reports that during a speech in Anchorage yesterday, Vincent DeVito, the Interior Department's Counselor for Energy Policy "said kick-starting oil development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, or ANWR, is a priority for the Trump administration." DeVito told a conference for ocean researchers in Anchorage, "The untapped potential of ANWR is significant. But it is the Trump administration that had the guts to

step up to the plate and facilitate production." DeVito "also talked about increasing oil development in a different swath of federal land in the Arctic — the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, or NPR-A."

Additional coverage was provided by [KTOO-FM](#) Juneau, AK (9/20, Harball).

Sonoya Mud Turtle In Danger Of Extinction.

[KVOA-TV](#) Tucson, AZ (9/19, Kinney) reports that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has "determined the Sonoya mud turtle as an endangered species." Steve Spangle, the Service's Arizona Field Supervisor, said, "The Sonoya mud turtle is clearly in danger of extinction. Protecting it under the Endangered Species Act will marshal increased attention and the resources needed by our U.S. and Mexican conservation partners to improve and expand its dwindling habitat and populations." The listing is set to go into effect October 20, 2017.

Additional coverage was provided by the [Arizona Daily Star](#) (9/20, Windes) and [Arizona Public Media](#) (9/20, Paniagua).

Mexico Quakes Rattle Nevada's Endangered Devils Hole Pupfish.

The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (9/20, Brean) reports that "two deadly earthquakes in Mexico this month also left their mark on a water-filled cavern in Nevada that is home to one of world's most endangered fish." According to the article, "shockwaves from the quakes traveled more than 1,500 miles to churn the water inside the only known habitat of the Devils Hole pupfish." Kevin Wilson, a Death Valley aquatic ecologist for the National Park Service, said that "the pupfish seem to be reacting to the earthquakes the way they have in the past: with an increase in mating and spawning behavior."

Will There Be Lights?

The [Kauai \(HI\) Garden Island News](#) (9/20, Else) reports that "stadium lights could once again come to life for a few night football games on Kauai this season, if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service signs off." On Monday, Kauai County Mayor Bernard Carvalho Jr. "signed a memorandum of understanding between the County of Kauai and USFWS regarding the reinstatement of night football games." However, no names from the FWS "have landed on the dotted lines." FWS spokeswoman Holly Richards said, "The service continues to work with the county to develop a MOU that meets the conservation needs of seabirds while recognizing the importance of football to local communities." Richards cited "due process" for the agency's lack of signatures.

Environmentalists, Ranchers Trade Barbs In Killing Of Mexican Gray Wolf.

[Cronkite News](#) (9/20, Windes) reports that "environmentalists and livestock owners are pointing fingers after government agents killed an endangered Mexican gray wolf last month for preying on cattle, the first wolf killed for depredation in 10 years." According to the article, "a Fish and Wildlife Service memo justifying the 'lethal control' of the wolf found one calf had been 'killed by wolves, one was probably killed by wolves, and a third (cow) died of natural causes' on Aug. 2." The article says that "ranchers welcomed the action, saying Fish and Wildlife 'was finally making a good decision.'" However, "environmentalists say ranchers are at least partly to blame for failing to remove the carcass of the cow that died of natural causes, attracting wolves from the 'Diamond pack' that would otherwise have kept their distance."

Hydrological Models Scrutinized In Bottling-plant Hearing.

The [Daily Inter Lake \(MT\)](#) (9/20, Reilly) reports that "the Montana Artesian Water Company's water-use permit hearing turned technical in its second day." Lawyers "from both sides spent Wednesday cross-examining scientists from Montana's Water Rights Bureau, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and elsewhere on the hydrology of the region near Creston where Flathead resident Lew Weaver's firm seeks to withdraw groundwater for bottling." According to the article, "the location and spacing of test wells, the underground rock layers' ability to hold and carry water, connections between aquifer and surface, and other hydrological details drew close scrutiny at the hearing in Kalispell."

Tusk-Smuggling Case Ends In Prison For Canadian Ex-Mountie: U.S. Judge.

The [Reuters](#) (9/20, Stempel) reports that "a retired Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer was sentenced on Wednesday by a U.S. judge to five years and two months in prison, after pleading guilty to 10 money laundering charges related to a scheme to smuggle Arctic narwhal tusks." Gregory Logan "had been accused by U.S. prosecutors of smuggling more than 250 tusks from

2000 to 2010 into the United States from Canada, in a scheme to sell tusks to collectors and send proceeds back to Canada." Logan, "who retired as a Canadian mountie in 2003, had been a target of a narwhal tusk-smuggling probe, dubbed 'Operation Longtooth,' by a Canadian government agency now known as Environment and Climate Change Canada."

Also reporting are the [Bangor \(ME\) Daily News](#) (9/20, Harrison) and [BBC News \(UK\)](#) (9/20).

Washington Man Sentenced For Trafficking Whale Tusks.

The [AP](#) (9/20) reports that "a Brinnon, Washington man was sentenced to six months in prison and fined \$25,000 for trafficking ivory from protected species." U.S. Attorney Annette Hayes "says David L. Boone took part in an operation between 2006 and 2008 that smuggled narwhal tusks from Canada into the U.S." Boone "pleaded guilty to money laundering and was sentenced Wednesday in federal court in Maine to more than five years in prison."

National Park Service

National Parks To Waive Entrance Fees Sept. 30 For National Public Lands Day.

The [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (9/20) reports that the National Park Service will "offer free admission to parks across the country Saturday, Sept. 30, as part of National Public Lands Day." National Public Lands Day, "held annually on the fourth Saturday in September, is the nation's largest, single-day volunteer event for public lands."

Police Arrest Man Accused Of Vandalizing The Lincoln Memorial With A Penny.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/19, Moyer) reports that "a man was arrested Monday after police say he vandalized the Lincoln Memorial." A U.S. Park Police officer "observed the man about 1 p.m. using a penny to scrawl the letters 'HYPT MAEK' on the fifth pillar on the north side of the memorial, authorities said." The man, "identified as 21-year-old Nurtilek Bakirov, of Kyrgyzstan, was arrested and charged with malicious destruction of property."

Additional coverage was provided by [Fox News](#) (9/21).

'Tangled Rat's Nest' To Memorialize Dwight Eisenhower.

The [Daily Caller](#) (9/20, Phippen) reports that "the latest 'doodle-like sketch' design for a massive tapestry in the proposed Eisenhower Memorial is one step closer to becoming a reality." The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts "hung a small sample of the massive tapestry that will be the focal point of the four-acre memorial park Wednesday, providing a preview of the final product."

Whitney Lofts Project In Downtown Syracuse Needs Feds' OK To Uncover Windows.

The [Syracuse \(NY\) Post-Standard](#) (9/20, Moriarty) reports that Sen. Charles Schumer on Wednesday urged the National Park Service "to quickly approve a development group's plans to turn the upper floors of two historic downtown Syracuse buildings into apartments." Schumer "said the Park Service's approval is needed for the \$4.2 million project to receive federal historic preservation tax credits, worth up to 20 percent of the cost of the renovations."

Sequoia National Park Wants To Raise Annual Fee.

The [Visalia \(CA\) Times-Delta](#) (9/20, Cederlof) reports that Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks have "proposed an increase of the park-specific annual pass from \$50 to \$60." According to the article, "the \$10 increase would put the park in line with the service-wide pricing guidelines for park-specific annual passes." The article says that "if adopted, the new price would go into effect on Jan. 1."

Henry Sibley Band Will March In July 4 Parade In Washington, D.C.

The [St. Paul \(MN\) Pioneer Press](#) (9/20, Magan) reports that "the marching band from Henry Sibley High School in Mendota Heights has been picked to represent Minnesota in next year's Independence Day parade in Washington, D.C." The invitation from the National Independence Day Committee, the Interior Department, and the National Park Service was announced Wednesday.

National Park Service Working To Restore Historic Homes Near Central High.

[KTHV-TV](#) Little Rock, AR (9/20, Perkins) reports that "as Little Rock prepares to celebrate 60 years of an integrated Central High School, the National Park Service is working to make homes

in front of the school apart of its history." The NPS is "attempting to restore the homes, while also keeping history alive."

Online 'Walk 93' Registration Deadline Is Friday.

The [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#) (9/20, Huba) reports that "the public has until Friday to register for the third annual 'Walk 93,' a noncompetitive walk in honor of the 40 passengers and crew who died on United Flight 93." The article says that "proceeds from the immersive walk, sponsored by the nonprofit Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial, will support the design and construction of the Temporary Memorial Trail in 2018." National Park Service interpretive rangers will lead the walk.

Docks, Marinas Get Repaired After Microburst On Lake Powell.

The [AP](#) (9/20) reports that "authorities say repairs are nearly finished to property in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area that was damaged by last week's microburst along the Arizona-Utah border." According to the article, "a sudden, powerful downward gust of wind swamped or sank dozens of powerboats and jet skis last Thursday on Lake Powell and resulted in damages to the park's docks and marinas." Also, "at the Wahweap Marina, water, power and sewer weren't available and the dock was damaged." National Park Service officials "say most of the pairs and docks have been repaired as of Tuesday and the Wahweap Marina should be reopened soon."

Infant Who Died In Lake Powell Boat Accident Identified.

The [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (9/19, Mims) reports that "Arizona authorities have identified an infant who died of injuries sustained in a weekend houseboat accident on Lake Powell." The Coconino County Sheriff's Office "said Tuesday that 6-month-old William Garner had passed away Monday, the day after he suffered 'major head trauma' 5:20 p.m. Sunday when the houseboat struck a beach near Navajo Canyon."

Office Of Insular Affairs

All Of Puerto Rico Without Power As Hurricane Maria Makes Landfall.

Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico Wednesday causing extensive damage. All three network news broadcasts led with the story Wednesday evening and it garners heavy print coverage this morning. Much of the coverage focuses on the devastation in Puerto Rico, but damage to Dominica and the storm's path towards the Dominican Republic and Turks and Caicos also garner coverage.

[NBC Nightly News](#) (9/20, lead story, 3:15, Holt) reported in its lead story that in Puerto Rico "hundreds of homes are damaged or destroyed, streets are flooded, and 100 percent of that US island is without power after Hurricane Maria slammed ashore with 155-mile-an-hour winds." In its lead story, the [CBS Evening News](#) (9/20, lead story, 2:25, Mason) reported that Maria made landfall "as a Category 4 and touched off catastrophic flooding. The storm is moving away from Puerto Rico tonight, toward the Dominican Republic, and tomorrow, the Bahamas." CBS (Begnaud) added that "despite the devastation, no deaths or injuries have been reported, so far." Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello "is telling people to stay calm, but he's warning that the island is on the verge of losing communication." Rossello "is asking for generators to be shipped from the mainland here to the island to help restore power as a dusk-to-dawn curfew has just gone into effect."

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/20, lead story, 2:55, Oquendo) reported in its lead story that Puerto Rico's emergency management director says "the entire island is destroyed." Many homes on the island were "not built to withstand any hurricane, let alone a Category 4." According to officials, "many areas will be uninhabitable for weeks, maybe even months." Rossello said on [CNN's Anderson Cooper 360](#) (9/20), "The damage is very extensive. It is nothing short of a major disaster. We have a lot of flooding, a lot of infrastructure damage. Our tell communications system is partially down. Our energy infrastructure is completely down."

The [New York Times](#) (9/20) reports that while Rossello said "more than 500 shelters had been opened...he could not vouch for the storm-worthiness of all of those structures." In what the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20, De Córdoba, De Avila) calls an apparent effort to prevent looting, Rossello announced via tweet that he is imposing a 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew from Wednesday to Saturday. Rossello wrote, "I am making a call for calm, understanding and prudence during these difficult days for Puerto Rico."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/20, Hennessy-Fiske, Lee) reports that a statement from the White House said "that President Trump is continuing to monitor the situation and that he and First Lady Melania Trump 'send their thoughts and prayers to all those in harm's way.'" White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said on [Fox News' Fox & Friends](#) (9/20), "FEMA Director Brock Long has been working alongside all the state and local officials really trying to make sure we put as many resources in place as possible. Thanks to technology we have a lot more leeway on the front end of a lot of these storms that are allowing us to preposition resources. The federal government is doing all we can to help people in both, you know, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and other surrounding islands as these storms are moving in."

The [Washington Post](#) (9/20, Schmidt) says recovery efforts "could be hampered by long-standing financial problems that led the territorial government to file for a form of bankruptcy in May." Puerto Rican Rep. Jennifer Gonzalez-Colon expressed a similar concern on [CNN's The Lead](#) (9/20), saying, "I spoke last night with Vice President Mike Pence and FEMA Director Brock Long and other members of cabinet regarding how are we going to put Puerto Rico back on track considering the financial situation Puerto Rico got in the recent years. And, thank God, Vice President Pence conveyed the message of the President of the United States and the whole government is going to be helping out the island. As a matter of fact, there are more than 400 rescue teams and federal employees from all over the nation waiting until it is safe to go outside and begin the search and rescue already on the island."

The [Washington Post](#) (9/20, Faiola) reports that a "direct hit" by Maria "caused massive damage to homes and buildings, washed out roads, upended water pipelines and left at least seven people dead" in Dominica. According to official estimates, "70 to 80 percent of Dominica's structures sustained storm damage, ranging from ripped-off roofs to near-total destruction." The Post adds that "intact public buildings were being converted into emergency shelters for scores of homeless residents."

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/20, story 2, 0:55, Muir) reported that Maria's center is currently about 75 miles east of the Dominican Republic. While it's a category two storm, it "may very well strengthen" as it heads to Turks and Caicos. Al Roker said on [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/20, story 3, 1:00, Holt) that the Dominican Republic will get "four to six feet of surge, 8 to 16 inches of rain." Turks and Caicos, meanwhile, "may be the next really big devastated area with 125 mph winds, a storm surge of nine to 12 feet and nine to 16 inches."

Japan And South Korea Praise Trump's Korea Remarks, Germany Criticizes Them.

The [AP](#) (9/20, Pennington) reports Japan called for "international unity Wednesday in pressuring North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons, even as another key US ally pushed back" against President Trump's threat to "totally destroy" the rogue nation if it attacked. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe "devoted his entire speech" at the General Assembly to North Korea, warning that the "gravity of this threat is unprecedented." Meanwhile, German Chancellor Angela Merkel told German broadcaster Deutsche Welle that she "clearly" disagrees with Trump's threat to destroy North Korea. Instead, "she offered help in negotiating a solution with North Korea, noting that Germany played a role in talks with Iran to limit its nuclear program."

Greg Palkot reported on [Fox News Special Report](#) (9/20) that South Korea cast Trump's threat as a "firm and concrete stance for peace and safety." In addition, Fox showed Yoshihide Suga, Japan's chief cabinet secretary, saying, "I highly appreciated the position that all options are on the table."

China, Russia Also Critical Of Trump. Palkot also reported on [Fox News Special Report](#) (9/20) that North Korea's other neighbors "were not so pleased." Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang was shown saying, "All Security Council resolutions call on all parties to stay committed to peacefully resolving the Korean Peninsula issue through a political and diplomatic approach." Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was shown stating, "We don't doubt the United States has the capacity to do something very destructive, but I paid attention to another part of [President Trump's] speech when he said he respects sovereignty and equality in international relations."

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/20, story 6, 0:20, Muir), meanwhile, reported North Korea's foreign minister, Ri Yong-ho, described Trump's comments as "the sound of a dog barking," and said "North Korea is not scared."

Experts: North Korea Likely To Fire More Missiles After Trump's Speech. The [Washington Post](#) (9/20, Fifield) reports that Kim Jong-un's regime "tells the North Korean people every day that the United States wants to destroy them and their country. Now, they will hear it from another source: from the president of the United States himself." Trump's words Tuesday, analysts say,

"feed right into that narrative." Jung H. Pak, chair of Korea studies at the Brookings Institution, warned that Trump's "demonizing" of Kim personally "would inflame the situation." The Post notes that previous personal attacks on Kim "have elicited an outsized response from North Korea."

WPost Analysis: Lack Of US Ambassador In Seoul A "Glaring Omission." The [Washington Post](#) (9/20, Nakamura) reports that while President Trump and his top aides "say they're doing everything in their power to pursue a diplomatic and peaceful resolution to the North Korea nuclear threat. But eight months into Trump's tenure, he has yet to nominate a US ambassador to South Korea, a glaring omission as the White House tries to formulate a coherent policy to confront Pyongyang." The vacancy, says the Post, has "left President Moon Jae-in's new government without a prestigious and powerful partner from the Trump administration on the ground in Seoul at a time of escalating anxiety in East Asia – and without someone to help decode the president's rhetorical bombast."

Reuters: Russia Supplying North Korea With Fuel. According to [Reuters](#) (9/20, Nikolskaya), "At least eight North Korean ships that left Russia with a cargo of fuel this year headed for their homeland despite declaring other destinations, a ploy that US officials say is often used to undermine sanctions." Reuters says it "has no evidence of wrongdoing by the vessels," but US officials "say that changing destination mid-voyage is a hallmark of North Korean state tactics to circumvent" international sanctions. Both the Treasury and State Departments "declined to answer questions about Reuters' findings."

Fellow Calls For UN To Expel North Korea. Claudia Rosett, a foreign policy fellow with the Independent Women's Forum, writes in the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20) that the UN should expel North Korea. While no nation has ever been expelled, Rosett argues that the UN charter does, however, provide for eviction: "A Member of the United Nations which has persistently violated the Principles in the present Charter may be expelled from the Organization by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council."

US Geological Survey

Los Angeles Officials Prepare For Potential Big Earthquake.

[NBC Nightly News](#) (9/20, story 6, 2:00, Holt) reported that a study from the US Geological Survey found that the chance of an earthquake magnitude eight or larger near Los Angeles in the next 30 years "has doubled since 2008" – bolstering the city's concern for and desire to prepare for the next large earthquake. Experts "say a major quake along the San Andreas in Southern California fault could kill 1,800 people, injure 53,000, destroy 1,500 buildings, and damage 300,000 more," and a serious quake "could also cripple the city's water supply and take as long as six months to repair." City officials have spent \$14 billion on seismic upgrades to transportation infrastructure, and Mayor Eric Garcetti has received a new "preparedness plan."

Sensors Deployed To Measure Effects Of Jose On New England.

The [AP](#) (9/20) reports that "federal scientists have installed 17 storm-tide sensors along the coast of southern New England to measure the effects of Tropical Storm Jose." The U.S. Geological Survey "said Wednesday that the sensors — seven in Connecticut, seven in Massachusetts and three in Rhode Island — were placed in areas likely to receive large waves and storm surge from Jose." The agency "says data collected can help quantify wave heights, forces, and speeds, under various storm conditions, topographies, ecologies, and land uses."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Springfield \(MA\) Republican](#) (9/20, Croteau).

Frogs In Minnesota, Across U.S. Dying Of Little-known Disease, Scientists Find.

The [St. Paul \(MN\) Pioneer Press](#) (9/20, Myers) reports that "a previously little-known infectious disease has emerged as a major killer of frogs in Minnesota and nine other states, according to a study by the U.S. Geological Survey recently published in the journal Nature." Researchers "studied 247 frog die-offs in 43 states from 1999 through 2015 and found that severe *Perkins* infections, or SPI, caused 21 major mortality events in 10 states total."

Additional Reading.

- *The United States Needs An Earthquake Warning System Already.* [Wired](#) (9/20, Niiler).
- *California Earthquake Warning System On Shaky Ground.* [KABC-TV](#) Los Angeles (9/20, Hayes).
- *National Weather Service To Discontinue Osage River Monitoring.* [Mason City \(IA\) Globe Gazette](#)

(9/20).

- *Scientists Say Recent Quake Swarm At Rainier Is Not Unusual.* [Seattle Times](#) (9/20, Doughton).
- *The West's Wildfires Are Taking A Toll On Reservoirs.* [Water Deeply](#) (9/20, Bland).

Top National News

Sources: Trump “Leaning Against” Re-Certifying Iran Deal.

[NBC Nightly News](#) (9/20, story 8, 0:30, Holt) reported, “President Trump says he’s made up his mind about the Iran nuclear deal, but he’s not saying if the US will stay in the agreement.” However, four sources tell NBC News that Trump is “leaning against re-certifying Iran’s compliance with the deal.” On its website, [NBC News](#) (9/20) reports such a move would put “the decision of whether the US will withdraw from the accord in the hands of Congress, according to four sources – including one senior administration official.” NBC says that “such a move would come prior to an Oct. 15 deadline and would trigger a 60-day window for lawmakers to determine whether to reimpose sanctions.” Still, “several of the sources caution the president could change his mind over the next three weeks.”

On Wednesday, the [New York Times](#) (9/20, Baker, Sengupta) reports President Trump said that he has made a decision on the future of the Iran deal, “but declined to tell reporters what it was.” Speaking to reporters, Trump said, “I have decided,” repeating the phrase “three times.” Pressed by reporters, he added: “I’ll let you know. I’ll let you know.” The Times notes that while Trump has already certified Iran’s compliance twice, he “has made clear that he is reluctant to certify compliance a third time, citing destabilizing activities by Iran that are not directly covered by the agreement.”

The [Washington Times](#) (9/20, Boyer) and [Politico](#) (9/20, Nelson) also report briefly on Trump’s remarks, while [USA Today](#) (9/20, Jackson) says Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, in his remarks to the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, “said Trump is the one threatening to violate the agreement – and that the former New York businessman is making unfounded accusations.” Said Rouhani, “It will be a great pity if this agreement were to be destroyed by ‘rogue’ newcomers to the world of politics: the world will have lost a great opportunity.”

Another [USA Today](#) (9/20, Michaels, Dorell) report notes that Rouhani “did not mention Trump by name...but his remarks were clearly directed at the US president,” and the [AP](#) (9/20, Peltz, Lederer) too says the remarks were “clearly directed” at Trump. [Bloomberg News](#) (9/20, Foroohar, Nasser) says the Iranian leader “rejected any US-led effort to alter the 2015 nuclear agreement,” and the [Washington Post](#) (9/20, Morello) reports Rouhani “blasted” Trump for his “ignorant, absurd and hateful” speech before the General Assembly a day earlier.

The [AP](#) (9/20, Lee) says the “jabbing” between Trump and Rouhani “set the stage for a contentious meeting of the nuclear accord’s parties” on Wednesday on the sidelines of the General Assembly, including Secretary of State Tillerson and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. The AP says that “a year ago, such a get-together would have been considered routine,” but “in the current environment, it is anything but ordinary.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20, Stokols, Schwartz, Peker) reports Tillerson said late Tuesday that the US would remain a part of the agreement only if it is modified to tighten restrictions on Iran’s nuclear program that loosen after the year 2025 under the deal. [Reuters](#) (9/20, Hafezi, Holland) reports that a “source familiar with the US discussions” said the Administration is “also considering ways to leave the agreement intact, sanction Iran for its missile tests and support for extremist groups, and then seek to strengthen the pact.”

The [Washington Times](#) (9/20, Persons) reports White House press secretary Sarah Sanders “hinted” Wednesday that Trump “might make changes to the Iran nuclear deal soon.” When asked what type of announcement Trump may be planning, Sanders told Fox News that “plans may change” for the current deal, and that Trump will take “actions” to “fix the mistakes of being part of that deal on the front end.” She did not, however, say when an announcement with his plans could be expected.

“Sources” To Free Beacon: Tillerson, Haley “At Odds” Over Deal. In what the [Washington Free Beacon](#) (9/20, Kredo) calls a “sign of the ongoing internal dissent over ending” the agreement, “multiple sources” told the Free Beacon that Tillerson and Ambassador Haley “have been at odds over the deal,” with Haley “privately expressing dismay with Tillerson over his continued efforts to preserve the nuclear agreement.” Tillerson and Haley “held a private powwow Wednesday with international leaders regarding the future of the nuclear deal, a sign of Haley’s vital role” in the issue.

After Wednesday's meeting, the [Washington Examiner](#) (9/20, Morrongiello) reports Tillerson told reporters, "We had a very open and candid exchange with all of the parties to the agreement. We clearly have significant issues with the agreement." He also confirmed that Trump has reached a decision on recertifying Iran's compliance with the agreement, but "declined to disclose the details of it."

Paul Wants US To Stay In Agreement. In an interview with [Politico](#) (9/20, Kim) Wednesday, Sen. Rand Paul, who opposed the nuclear deal with Iran two years ago, said he wants the US to stay in the agreement because he believes evidence shows that Iran has been complying with its terms. "Most of the complaints about Iran don't have anything to do with the agreement. They complain about ballistic missiles and other things, but that's not part of the agreement," Paul told Politico. "I think while the agreement's not perfect, my main concern has always been compliance. But if they're complying with it, I think we should stay in it."

Panetta Defends Deal, Rice Blasts Trump. Former CIA Director Leon Panetta said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (9/20) the concerns about the Iran nuclear deal are "understandable," but "the fact is we do have an agreement" that has "been effective at preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon," and "we have evidence that Iran has abided by that agreement." Panetta said that if Trump withdraws, "he has to think seriously about the fact that at some point down the road he will bear responsibility for Iran getting a nuclear weapon."

The [Daily Caller](#) (9/20) reports former national security advisor Susan Rice "didn't mince words" Wednesday when criticizing Trump's speech at the UN. Rice was "especially unhappy" with Trump's insistence that the Iran nuclear deal is a "one-sided deal" and "an embarrassment" to the US. Said Rice, "We could begin a process of dialogue on what comes next after the deal. But we can't do that when hurling threats, when threatening to walk out, when acting like a spoiled child at the dinner table."

EU Official: Iran Deal "Working." The [AP](#) (9/20) reports EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said Wednesday that all parties to the Iran nuclear deal "agree that the accord is being implemented as planned and US complaints about other Iranian behavior should be discussed outside the context of the agreement." Speaking to reporters in New York, Mogherini said the deal "is working and is delivering for its purpose."

Macron: If US Scraps Deal, World Could Face Another North Korea Crisis. [USA Today](#) (9/20, Ullmann) reports French President Emmanuel Macron urged President Trump Wednesday "to stick with the Iran nuclear deal" because "what else do we have? We would be put in the North Korea situation." Macron told a group of editors and reporters in New York that without the current agreement, Tehran "would be able to rush ahead with a nuclear weapons program the way North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un is, creating a new international crisis."

Media Analyses: Trump's Criticism Of Iran Deal Poses Problems For North Korea Strategy. An [AP](#) (9/20, Pennington) analysis says Trump's threat "to obliterate North Korea left no doubt about his determination to stop the communist country's nuclear weapons buildup," and "his disparagement of the Iran nuclear deal in the same speech offered Pyongyang little hope of a negotiated solution." While Trump said, "It is time for North Korea to realize that the denuclearization is its only acceptable future," the AP says he "offered no path toward making that future a reality."

David Sanger similarly writes in a [New York Times](#) (9/20) analysis that the "dynamics" of the two cases "are entirely different, but they are also oddly interdependent. If Mr. Trump makes good on his threat to pull out of the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran, how will he then convince the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, that America will honor the commitment to integrate North Korea into the world community if only it disarms – the demand Mr. Trump made from the podium of the United Nations."

Security Firm: US Aviation, Energy Companies Targeted By Iranian Hackers. [USA Today](#) (9/20, Weise) reports that a "suspected Iranian hacking group has been targeting aviation and energy companies in the United States, Saudi Arabia and South Korea since 2013," computer security company FireEye said in a report released Wednesday. The group "seems largely to have engaged in stealth spying to give Iranian military and corporate interests information about possible enemies and competition." However, the researchers also found "signs of links to malicious software called SHAPESHIFT capable of destroying data within a company's network." FireEye cautioned that it had "not directly observed the hackers carry out any destructive operations, but the capability appears to be present."

Media Analyses: Mueller's Latest Steps Indicate Trump Himself Under Scrutiny.

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/20, story 4, 2:10, Muir) reported on "new steps" by special counsel

Robert Mueller "suggesting President Trump's own actions are now under scrutiny, including his firing of FBI Director James Comey and the meeting with Russian officials in the Oval Office the very next day." ABC's Jonathan Karl: "Tonight, the clearest indication yet [that] Mueller is looking at the actions of President Trump himself." The [CBS Evening News](#) (9/20, story 3, 2:20, Mason) reported, "Mueller has been bombarding the White House with requests for documents."

The [AP](#) (9/20, Tucker) reports that Mueller's office "has requested a large batch of documents from the White House and is expected to interview at least a half dozen current and former aides in the coming weeks." A person familiar with the investigation said investigators "want information on, among other topics, a June 2016 meeting at Trump Tower that Donald Trump Jr. attended with a Russian lawyer and the administration's response to it," as well as "what White House officials including Trump knew about the Justice Department's investigation" into ex-National Security Adviser Michael Flynn.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/20, Leonnig, Helderman) reports, "White House lawyers are now working to turn over internal documents that span 13 categories investigators for the special counsel have identified as critical to their probe." [USA Today](#) (9/20, Jackson, Johnson, Heath) reports that officials speaking under condition of anonymity said that the White House "has been cooperating with Mueller's requests for the past several weeks, in part to avoid subpoenas for individual testimony. The officials said they were not sure when the White House would finish turning over documents."

The [New York Times](#) (9/20, Schmidt) says that the "document requests provide the most details to date about the breadth of Mr. Mueller's investigation, and show that several aspects of his inquiry are focused squarely on Mr. Trump's behavior in the White House." However, the [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/20, Bierman) reports that John Dowd, an attorney for the President, said, "There's nothing remarkable or unusual about his requests. ... It's not like something's about to happen. It's just a routine inquiry by Bob [Mueller]."

David Gergen said on [CNN's Anderson Cooper 360](#) (9/20), "As soon as I heard there were 13 different categories in which Mueller was asking for information or demanding information from the White House, you immediately thought this probe has widened way beyond what we or understood and it has clearly deepened." Gergen added, "I think this deepens the sense that they're doing everything they can to see what evidence there is of obstruction of justice."

Grassley: Senate Preparing Subpoenas For Two Top FBI Officials. [CNN](#) (9/20, Herb, Raju) reports on its website that Senate Judiciary Chairman Charles Grassley said Tuesday that the Senate legal counsel "is preparing subpoenas for two senior FBI officials the Justice Department is preventing the committee from interviewing." Grassley and ranking member Sen. Dianne Feinstein "have repeatedly asked the two senior FBI officials – Carl Ghattas and James Rybicki – to sit down for a transcribed interview to discuss the Comey firing."

Manafort Offered "Private Briefings" On Campaign To Russian Billionaire. The [Washington Post](#) (9/20, Hamburger, Helderman, Leonnig, Entous) reports that "less than two weeks before Donald Trump accepted the Republican presidential nomination," then-campaign chairman Paul Manafort "offered to provide briefings on the race" to Oleg Deripaska, "a Russian billionaire closely aligned with the Kremlin." In a July 7, 2016 email, Manafort wrote, "If he needs private briefings we can accommodate." The emails "are among tens of thousands of documents that have been turned over" to Mueller and to congressional investigators. The Post says that the documents show no evidence "that Deripaska received Manafort's offer or that any briefings took place."

Leon Panetta said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (9/20) that the fact Manafort "would offer a briefing on a political campaign to a Russian billionaire, someone obviously related to an adversary of the United States, raises some serious questions about just how much effort was made to try to get the Russians to participate in this last election campaign." But on the [CBS Evening News](#) (9/20, story 3, 2:20, Mason), Jeff Pegues reported, "Manafort's attorney did not deny the authenticity of the email but called the message 'innocuous,' and said, 'It's no secret Mr. Manafort was owed money by past clients,' implying it was a attempt to collect."

Ben Domenech of [The Federalist](#) (9/20) offers "13 Questions About The Wiretapping Of Paul Manafort," dealing with why Manafort was wiretapped, when the surveillance took place, and if the wiretap covered Trump Tower. Former CIA case officer Phil Giraldi asks at the [Daily Caller](#) (9/20), "Will anyone running for high office in the future want to be confronted by executive power acting secretly through the law enforcement and intelligence services to discredit him or her as well as a large and widening group of family and associates? ... Manafort, who has fully cooperated with the multiple investigations being conducted around Russiagate, is innocent until proven guilty."

Manafort Used Trump Campaign Email To Contact "Ukrainian Political Operative." [Politico](#)

(9/20, Dawsey) reports that Manafort "used his presidential campaign email account to correspond with a Ukrainian political operative with suspected Russian ties, according to people familiar with the correspondence." In emails to Konstantin Kilimnik, Manafort sought "repayment for previous work he did in Ukraine" and proposed discussing "potential new opportunities in the country."

Clapper: "It's Possible" That Wiretap Picked Up Trump. The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/20, Chaitin) reports, "Former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper suggested on Wednesday that 'it's possible' that President Trump's voice was picked up in a wiretap" as he spoke with Manafort. Clapper said on CNN, "It's certainly conceivable. ... I wouldn't want to go there, but I will say it's possible."

Facebook Facing Increasing Scrutiny Over Russia's Attempts At Influence. [Bloomberg News](#) (9/20, Litvan) reports that Facebook "is facing growing pressure from Congress over Russia's use of social media" to influence the 2016 election. In a Wednesday letter to the Federal Election Commission, Sens. Martin Heinrich and Ron Wyden, and Reps. John Conyers (D-MI), Elijah Cummings (D-MD), and John Sarbanes (D-MD) wrote, "We must address the threat posed by foreign citizens, companies, or organizations who aim to interfere with our political process." Sarbanes is seeking "new rules requiring disclosure for political ads on social media outlets...so they are as transparent as broadcast ads."

Senate Intelligence Vice Chairman Mark Warner said on [CNN's The Lead](#) (9/20) that "the level of some of the sophistication on the social media side and the level of targeting really leaves me with a lot of questions we are going to want Facebook to answer in public."

Media Matters: Drudge Report Has Become "Pipeline For Russian Propaganda." Matt Gertz of [Media Matters](#) (9/20) writes about "How Matt Drudge Became The Pipeline For Russian Propaganda," stating that Drudge "has for years used his site as a web traffic pipeline for Russian propaganda sites, directing his massive audience to nearly 400 stories from RT.com and fellow Russian-government-run English-language news sites SputnikNews.com and TASS.com since the beginning of 2012." The [Daily Caller](#) (9/20) covers the Media Matters piece under the headline "Pro-Clinton Group Tries To Link Drudge Report," writing, "Despite the...bombastic claims," the Media Matters study "lacks context about how The Drudge Report operates. ... Drudge typically removes and adds links throughout the day, linking to hundreds of websites on any given day."

Dershowitz Says It Is Hard To Say If President Can Expect AG's Loyalty. Alan Dershowitz writes in the [Washington Examiner](#) (9/20) that it is hard to say whether a president can expect loyalty from an attorney general, since under the US system, the AG serves both as "an advisor to the chief executive" and as "chief prosecutor." Dershowitz says "the system should be changed," but that there is "no perfect cure for the mistake made by our founders in merging the two incompatible goals of the current attorney general: that of political advisor to the president; and that of independent chief prosecutor."

Trump: Graham-Cassidy "At 47 Or 48" Senate Votes Right Now.

The [AP](#) (9/20, Werner) reports that President Trump said Wednesday that "the Republicans' last-resort 'Obamacare' repeal effort remains two or three votes short, forecasting days of furious lobbying ahead with a crucial deadline looming next week." Trump told reporters that "by his reckoning, 'we're at 47 or 48 already, senators, and a lot of others are looking at it very positively.'" [Reuters](#) (9/20, Mason) reports that Trump also said, "I thought that when I won, I would go to the Oval Office, sit down at my desk, and there would be a healthcare bill on my desk, to be honest. And it hasn't worked out that way. And I think a lot of Republicans are embarrassed by it."

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said on [Fox News' Fox & Friends](#) (9/20) that "we have to have a program that actually works and we know that that's not Obamacare. It's simply not sustainable. It's collapsing. There's many markets where they don't even have providers anymore. We have got to get a system in place that actually works for all Americans."

The [Washington Times](#) (9/20, Howell) reports that a vote will take place next week, according to a spokesman for Senate Majority Leader McConnell. [Politico](#) (9/20, Everett) reports, "The bill does not yet have the public support of 50 senators, but GOP insiders are growing more confident it will pass." Sen. John Thune said on [Fox News Special Report](#) (9/20), "We are a handful of votes short of having the 50 that we need. ... I think we're going to be working very hard over the course of the next few days to try and get to 50 so we can get this across the finish line." Karl Rove writes in his [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20) column that the bill could reach 50 votes, making GOP repeal promises a reality.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20, Peterson, Radnofsky) reports that Trump urged Republicans

to back the measure, [tweeting](#), "I hope Republican Senators will vote for Graham-Cassidy and fulfill their promise to Repeal & Replace ObamaCare. Money direct to States!" He also criticized Sen. Rand Paul, an opponent of the bill, [tweeting](#), "Rand Paul is a friend of mine but he is such a negative force when it comes to fixing healthcare. Graham-Cassidy Bill is GREAT! Ends Obamacare!"

Trump also [tweeted](#), "I would not sign Graham-Cassidy if it did not include coverage of pre-existing conditions. It does! A great Bill. Repeal & Replace." However, [Axios](#) (9/20, Owens) reports that the bill "does allow states to waive the ACA's ban on charging people with pre-existing conditions higher premiums than healthy people."

On the [CBS Evening News](#) (9/20, story 4, 2:05, Mason), Nancy Cordes reported, "Republicans Bill Cassidy and Lindsey Graham sprinted from meeting to meeting today...trying to close the sale on the party's last, best shot at replacing Obamacare." The Graham-Cassidy bill "would keep Obamacare's taxes in place, but turn most of the revenues over to the states to come up with their own healthcare systems." The [AP](#) (9/20, Woodward) reports that Graham called the bill he co-authored "a 'historic opportunity' and asserted: 'We're going to vote. Everyone will be held accountable.'" [Roll Call](#) (9/20, McIntire) says the measure "would dramatically restructure the individual health insurance market by giving states block grants to fund health insurance coverage," and would "transition traditional Medicaid, which is an entitlement, to a system that gives states a capped amount of funding based on their Medicaid population."

[Roll Call](#) (9/20, Williams) reports, "Republican senators face the prospect of retreating from their previous public stances in order to support [the] fast-moving legislation." [The Hill](#) (9/20, Carney), the [Washington Examiner](#) (9/20, Weaver), and [Breitbart](#) (9/20, Moran) briefly report on the announcement of the upcoming vote.

Murkowski Again In Spotlight As Vote Approaches. The [Washington Post](#) (9/20, A1, Sullivan) reports that Sen. Lisa Murkowski is again the spotlight as "one of at least four Republicans who remain unsure whether to support" the bill. Murkowski "regularly breaks with her party – yet she is also willing to play ball. 'The problem last time was process and substance,' Murkowski said Tuesday...explaining why she might be willing to support the current measure despite voting against the last one in July. 'Nobody knew what we were really looking to in voting on.'"

Congressional correspondent Phil Mattingly said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (9/20) that GOP leaders are "gathering information and specific asks from specific senators that will change this bill in an effort to try and get them on board. Most notably though they're targeting Lisa Murkowski." Murkowski met Wednesday with Graham and Cassidy "to figure out exactly what this bill would do to Alaska and what Republican leaders and Administration officials can do to make sure the state is not disproportionately affected by this massive change in the US healthcare system."

Johnson: Bill Would Shift Power To States. Sen. Ron Johnson writes in [USA Today](#) (9/20), "Obamacare was never designed to be patient-friendly. In fact, one of the key tenets of Obamacare is taking power away from patients and local officials. Obamacare gives this decision-making power to the federal government." Graham-Cassidy "would change that by block-granting Obamacare spending to states, empowering those closest to their communities to provide effective solutions."

Lanhee Chen of the Hoover Institution writes in the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20) that the bill's federalism is its most appealing component. However, Avik Roy of the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity, a former policy adviser to several GOP presidential candidates, writes in the [Washington Post](#) (9/20), "Cassidy-Graham, in its current form, would put a heavy Washington hand on the federalism steering wheel. The bill would make it relatively easy for blue states to expand the role of single-payer health care, while making it rather difficult for red states to achieve market-oriented reforms."

Schumer, Pelosi Working To Defeat Measure. The [New York Times](#) (9/20, Stolberg) looks at how Senate Minority Leader Schumer and House Minority Leader Pelosi, who "have forged what may be the most surprisingly potent partnership in Mr. Trump's Washington," are now attempting to kill Graham-Cassidy. But both said Trump "was noncommittal."

Christie Opposes Bill. [Politico](#) (9/20, Jennings) reports that Gov. Chris Christie said Wednesday, "I oppose Graham-Cassidy because it is too injurious to the people of New Jersey. I'm certainly not going to support a bill that takes nearly \$4 billion from people in the state."

BCBS Association, AHIP Announce Opposition. The [New York Times](#) (9/20, Pear) reports that "the two major trade groups for insurers," the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and America's Health Insurance Plans, "came out forcefully" against the bill on Wednesday, "suggesting that its state-by-state block grants could create health care chaos in the short term

and a Balkanized, uncertain insurance market."

Avalere Health Analysis: 34 States Would Lose Federal Funding. The [Washington Post](#) (9/20, Goldstein, Elperin) reports that an analysis by Avalere Health concludes that Graham-Cassidy "would sharply reduce federal spending on health insurance and cause 34 states to lose such funding. ... States with relatively low medical costs, skimpy Medicaid benefits and no program expansion would win out. Texas would gain more than any state – \$35 billion from 2020 through 2026."

Cassidy Says Kimmel “Does Not Fully Grasp The Bill.” The [New York Times](#) (9/20, Rogers) reports, "Hours after Jimmy Kimmel unleashed a monologue attacking" Graham-Cassidy, the two senators "spent Wednesday morning defending the legislation against the late-night host, who in recent months has become an unlikely – and increasingly impassioned – critic." Kimmel "delivered an earnest monologue on Tuesday evening," accusing Cassidy "of failing to deliver on several key issues, including lowering premiums, expanding coverage, banning lifetime caps and not discriminating based on pre-existing conditions." Cassidy told Fox News that "Kimmel did not fully grasp the bill." Graham said on the same network, "I understand the emotional nature of having a sick child. ... I bet he looked at some liberal talking point, bought it hook, line and sinker, and went after Bill Cassidy without talking to him." Cassidy said on [MSNBC's Morning Joe](#) (9/20), "There will be more people covered...than are under status quo and we protect those with pre-existing conditions." Graham said on [Fox News' Fox & Friends](#) (9/20), "Our bill requires preexisting illnesses to be covered in the block grant."

On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/20, story 5, 2:05, Muir), Mary Bruce reported, "Cassidy promised he would defend protections for people with preexisting conditions. But now, Kimmel says he's not living up to his word." [Politico](#) (9/20, Diamond) writes, "In the war of words between Jimmy Kimmel and Sen. Bill Cassidy, the late-night host has the better grasp of health policy, health care analysts say." Experts say "that Kimmel's assessment was basically accurate because of the flexibility the bill gives states to set up their own health care systems." [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/20, story 7, 2:10, Holt) and [Bloomberg News](#) (9/20, Dennis, Tracer) also report on Kimmel's remarks and Cassidy's response.

Obama: “50th Or 60th” ACA Repeal Effort Is “Aggravating.” [USA Today](#) (9/20, Estepa) reports that former President Obama, addressing the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on Wednesday, said, "When I see people trying to undo that progress for the 50th or 60th time, with bills that would raise costs or reduce coverage, or rollback protections for older Americans or pre-existing conditions – the cancer survivor, the expecting mom or the child with autism or asthma, for whom coverage would once again be almost unattainable – it is aggravating. And all of this being done without any economic or actuarial or plain common sense rationale." [The Hill](#) (9/20, Carney) reports that Graham replied, "It's no surprise President Obama opposes sending money and power back to the states and closer to where the patients live. Obamacare was designed with the exact opposite goal in mind – which is to consolidate healthcare power and decision-making in Washington."

USA Today: Graham-Cassidy “Would Be Poison.” [USA Today](#) (9/20) runs an editorial headlined "Last-Ditch Obamacare Repeal Would Be Poison," writing, "This measure would strip tens of millions of people of their health coverage. It would gut Medicaid," and would "allow insurers in some states to deny coverage based on a previous medical condition. And it would allow insurers to skip coverage of essential services, including maternity care. That's all bad enough, but the Graham-Cassidy measure adds a new level of cynicism...with states that vote largely Republican faring far better than Democratic ones."

Number Of DACA Denials Has Doubled Under Trump.

The [Washington Times](#) (9/20, Dinan) reports that numbers released Wednesday show that DHS "has doubled the rate of denials of Dreamers' amnesty applications," suggesting that "the administration had been taking a harder line even before President Trump's announcement this month that he would phase out the DACA program altogether." From April to June, "32 percent applications for DACA status that were decided...were rejected," which is "twice the 16 percent rate of the last months of the Obama administration."

Pelosi: Dreamers’ Parents “Did A Great Thing” For The Country. The [Washington Times](#) (9/20, Dinan) reports that in comments that "strike a dissonant note from many analysts, who while saying the Dreamers are sympathetic since they had no say in the decision, say the parents do deserve blame for creating the problem," House Minority Leader Pelosi said Wednesday that "parents who brought their children to the US in defiance of the law 'did a great thing,' giving the country an infusion of successful young people."

Politico Analysis: Senate GOP Will Not “Fall In Line Behind” Trump’s Tax Plan.

[Politico](#) (9/20, Faler) reports that while House leaders and Trump Administration officials have worked for months to ensure “a smooth rollout” of tax reform legislation, Senate Republicans “are making it clear they’re not going to fall in line behind” Trump’s plan. Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch “warned” that the “Big Six” proposal “will only be advisory,” and Senate Republicans “are following that up with plans to seek a \$1.5 trillion tax cut, putting them at odds with the House, where Speaker Paul Ryan, another Big Six member, wants permanent changes that don’t add to the deficit.”

WSJournal: Corker-Toomey Deal Creates More Room For Tax Cuts. A [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20) editorial says the budget deal struck between Sens. Bob Corker and Pat Toomey creates additional space for cutting taxes and calls on Republicans to follow their lead and make good on their promise to pass tax reform.

Fed Leaves Rates Unchanged, Says It Will Reduce Its Bond Holdings.

The Federal Reserve on Wednesday said the US economy is “finally sturdy enough...to withdraw the extraordinary support it has provided it since the depths of the recession and financial crisis,” [USA Today](#) (9/20, Davidson) reports. In a move USA Today said could “nudge consumer borrowing costs higher,” the Fed agreed “to begin gradually shedding much of the roughly \$3.5 trillion in bonds it snapped up during and after the downturn to lower long-term interest rates.” Fed Chair Yellen told a news conference, “We’re working down our balance sheet because we think in some sense it’s no longer needed. ... We feel the US economy is performing well.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20, Timiraos) says the Fed has been signaling the move for months. In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20) says it supports the Fed’s decision to reduce its bond holdings, but adds that it should have begun sooner and should be happening faster.

The [New York Times](#) (9/20, Appelbaum) says the Fed “left its benchmark interest rate unchanged.” While “most Fed officials predicted in a new round of economic forecasts that the Fed would increase rates later this year,” officials “once again reduced their expectations for future rate hikes.” The median prediction now holds that “the benchmark rate will stabilize at 2.8 percent, down from a median estimate of 3 percent in June.”

Economists Blame “Start-Up Slump” For Slow Economic Expansion. The [New York Times](#) (9/20, Casselman) reports that economists say the “tame” economic expansion since the recession is due, in part, to “a start-up slump – a decline in the creation of new businesses – and a growing understanding of what’s behind it.” According to the Census Bureau, “414,000 businesses were formed in 2015.” While that is “a slight increase from the previous year,” it is “well below the 558,000 companies given birth in 2006, the year before the recession set in.” Many economists attribute the slump to “the rising power of the biggest corporations, which they argue is stifling entrepreneurship by making it easier for incumbent businesses to swat away challengers – or else to swallow them before they become a serious threat.”

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

“Tax Cuts For The Rich By Another Name.” The [New York Times](#) (9/21, Board) editorializes that Republicans on the Senate Budget Committee “violated their supposedly sacrosanct principles of fiscal hawkishness this week, by saying that it would be just fine with them to add \$1.5 trillion to the deficit over 10 years in order to cut taxes.” The Times says they “justify this hypocrisy by asserting what has been disproved time and again — that tax cuts spur the economy and compensate for any lost revenue” — while, “in fact, these cuts could hurt the very people they purport to help — small-business owners, middle-class professionals and working-class Americans.”

“Moscow’s Monument To Murder.” In an editorial, the [New York Times](#) (9/21) writes that “like many a statue in the United States that we have struggled over of late, the towering monument to Mikhail Kalashnikov, unveiled in a highly visible spot in Moscow on Tuesday, seems to have been put up for mostly the wrong reasons. The statue was promoted by the Russian culture minister, Vladimir Medinsky, a nationalist who spends much of his time glorifying Russian military history.” However, the Times says that “shortly before his death” in 2013 Kalashnikov wrote that “if his automatic weapon deprived people of life...was he not ‘guilty of people’s deaths, even enemies?’” The Times says “hopefully” the statue will “lead some viewers past Mr. Putin’s nationalistic intentions and to the painful questions that the inventor of the world’s most

abundant weapon wrestled with."

Washington Post.

"The White House's Preposterous Policy Analysis On Refugees." A [Washington Post](#) (9/20) editorial says that "xenophobes seeking an upper hand in the Trump administration have covered up" a report showing refugees' revenue contributions to federal, state, and local governments. A report ordered by the President in March "concluded that refugees had delivered \$63 billion more in federal, state and local tax revenue than they had cost in federal benefits through the decade ending in 2014." However, according to the New York Times, the fact that refugees "pay more in taxes than they draw in benefits...was suppressed by Stephen Miller, Mr. Trump's nativist senior policy adviser." The Post argues that "it would be not just callous for Washington to turn its back on" refugees, it would be "an act of national redefinition and an abdication of leadership."

"The 'New' Saudi Arabia Is Still A Dungeon." In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (9/20) writes that despite the "lofty rhetoric" of Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's "Vision 2030" declaration, Salman "increasingly resembles an earlier generation of leaders with authoritarian methods." The Post highlights the Saudi government's recent "wide-ranging crackdown" on clerics, journalists, and activists – many of whom were jailed with little explanation.

"DC Moves Toward A Safer Strategy For Youth Rehabilitation." In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (9/20) applauds the District of Columbia Council for offering a "comprehensive" and "thoughtful" overhaul of the city's Youth Rehabilitation Act. The new legislation "preserves the worthwhile goal of rehabilitation for defendants 21 or younger" but also tempers "this leniency with common-sense protections for public safety," such as making offensive actions like sexual assault ineligible for the act.

Wall Street Journal.

"Tax Reform Progress." A [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20) editorial says the budget deal struck between Sens. Bob Corker and Pat Toomey creates additional space for cutting taxes and calls on Republicans to follow their lead and make good on their promise to pass tax reform.

"The Slow And Steady Fed." In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20) says it supports the Fed's decision to reduce its bond holdings, but adds that it should have begun sooner and should be happening faster.

"Afternoon In Germany." In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/20) writes that German Chancellor Angela Merkel is heading toward a comfortable win in Germany's upcoming election, in what the Journal describes as a campaign built upon a mood of public complacency. The Journal argues that despite her win, Merkel will likely not provide the leadership necessary to launch the reforms the country needs to meet manufacturing competition from China or the challenge of Brexit, and may not have the determination to face threats from Vladimir Putin.

Big Picture

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Fed Unveils Plan To Pare Holdings, Hints At Another Rate Rise](#)
[Hackers Entered Equifax Systems In March](#)
[States Need \\$645 Billion To Pay Full Health-Care Costs](#)
[The Secret Of Angela Merkel's Longevity: Strategic Flip-Flops](#)

New York Times:

[Mueller Seeks White House Documents Related To Trump's Actions As President](#)
[Hurricane Maria Strikes, And Puerto Rico Goes Dark](#)
[At Mexican School Hit By Quake, Heartbreak And Dwindling Hope](#)
[Trump Pushes To Revisit Iran Nuclear Deal, And Asks Allies To Help](#)
[Insurers Come Out Swinging Against New Republican Health Care Bill](#)
[Confident Fed Sets Stage For December Rate Increase](#)

Washington Post:

[Death Toll In Mexico Rises Amid Search For Missing](#)

[Murkowski Finds Herself In Healthcare Hot Seat Again](#)
[Manafort Email Draws Interest](#)
[Probe Casts Wide Net Toward White House](#)
[No Power In Pummeled Puerto Rico](#)

Financial Times:

[Spanish National Police Raid Catalan Government Headquarters](#)
[Fed Calls Historic End To Quantitative Easing](#)
[Lawmakers Fear Russia's Facebook Meddling Continues](#)
[Toshiba Seals \\$18bn Memory Chip Sale To Bain-Led Group](#)

Washington Times:

[McConnell Pressures Senate Republican Holdouts To Support Last-Ditch Obamacare Repeal Bill](#)
[Iranian President Warns "Ignorant" Trump Not To Withdraw From Nuclear Deal](#)
[Islamic State Changes Battlefield Tactics To Guerrilla Warfare After Losing Territory To Coalition](#)
[Afghanistan Welcomes Trump Plan For Long-Term US Occupation](#)
[DACA Denial Rate Doubles Under Trump Administration](#)
[Clashes Intensify As Spain Tries To Block Catalonia's Secession Referendum](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Hurricane Tracking; Mexico City Earthquake; Russia Meddling Investigation; Congress-Healthcare Reform; North Korea Threats; Myanmar-Rohingya Genocide; Yankee Stadium Foul Ball Injury; Family Struck By Lightening; California-Drug Bust; Jake LaMotta Dies; Bone Marrow Donor.
CBS: Hurricane-Caribbean; Mexico City Earthquake; Russia Meddling Investigation; Congress-Healthcare Reform; Amazon-Bomb Materials; Yankee Stadium Foul Ball Injury; High School Football-Dangers; Jake LaMotta Dies; San Diego-Hepatitis A Outbreak; New York City-Global Citizen Festival.
NBC: Hurricane-Caribbean; Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Hurricane Tracking; Mexico City Earthquake 1; Mexico City Earthquake 2; Los Angeles Earthquake Preparation; Congress-Healthcare Reform; Trump-Iran Nuclear Deal; Jake LaMotta Dies; Airlines-Extra Fees; Mexico City Earthquake 3.

Network TV At A Glance:

Hurricane – 12 minutes, 25 seconds
Mexico City Earthquake – 11 minutes, 55 seconds
Congress-Healthcare Reform – 6 minutes, 20 seconds
Russia Meddling Investigation – 4 minutes, 30 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Mexico City Earthquake; Hurricane-Puerto Rico.
CBS: Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Mexico City Earthquake; Congress-Healthcare Reform; Fed Reserve-Interest Rate; Jake LaMotta Dies.
FOX: Mexico City Earthquake; Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Trump-Iran Nuclear Deal.
NPR: Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Mexico City Earthquake; Congress-Healthcare Reform; Wall Street News.

Washington Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT TRUMP — Participates in a meeting with the President of Afghanistan; participates in an expanded meeting with the President of Ukraine; participates in an expanded meeting with the President of the Republic of Korea; participates in an expanded meeting with the Prime Minister of Japan; participates in an expanded meeting with the President of Turkey.
VICE PRESIDENT PENCE — Participates in an interview with CBS This Morning; participates in an interview with Fox and Friends; joins the President to participate in an expanded meeting with the President of Afghanistan; joins the President to participate in an expanded meeting with the President of Ukraine; joins the President to participate in an expanded meeting with the President of the Republic of Korea; joins the President to participate in an expanded meeting with the Prime Minister of Japan.

US Senate: 8:30 AM Senate convenes for pro forma session – Senate convenes for a pro forma

session * No votes scheduled in the chamber today or tomorrow Location: Washington, DC
<http://www.senate.gov/>

No votes scheduled in the Senate.

US House: 11:00 AM House of Representatives convenes for pro forma session Location: Washington, DC <http://www.house.gov/>

On recess until 25 September.

Other: 10:30 AM Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Legislative Conference – Congressional Black Caucus Foundation 47th Annual Legislative Conference continues, themed 'And Still I Rise'. Agenda today includes the Inaugural Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Braintrust hosted by Democratic Rep. Alma Adams (10:30 AM EDT), and National Association of Real Estate Brokers 'State of Housing in Black America' forum, with Democratic Rep. Gregory Meeks (2:00 PM EDT) Location: Walter E. Washington Convention Center, 801 Mt Vernon Pl, Washington, DC www.cbcfinc.org/alc [#CBCFALC17](https://twitter.com/CBCFInc)

2:00 PM Rwandan President Kagame speaks at Brookings – 'Flagship reforms for a more effective African Union: A conversation with Rwandan President Paul Kagame' Brookings Institution discussion Location: The Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC <http://www.brookings.edu> [#AUReform](https://twitter.com/BrookingsInst)

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

Jimmy Kimmel: "I don't want to turn this into a Kanye and Taylor Swift-type situation, but when Senator Cassidy was on my show in May, he told me that he believed that every American family, regardless of income, should be able to get quality healthcare. And I believed he was sincere. Sadly, the bill he unveiled last week with Senator Lindsey Graham indicates that he was not sincere."

Jimmy Kimmel: "Imagine Donald Trump trying to read a healthcare bill. It's like trying to imagine a dog doing your taxes, it doesn't compute. I don't blame him, I did more homework this week than all my years of college combined. This healthcare bill is confusing, especially for those not experts in the field."

Stephen Colbert: "Republicans are trying to repeal and replace Obamacare, again. This is beyond beating a dead horse. This is getting damn close to bestiality."

Stephen Colbert: "Before the vote, Republicans have set aside 90 seconds of debate. In other words, they're going to kill Obamacare in roughly the amount of time it takes to microwave a frozen burrito. Both will kill you."

Stephen Colbert: "Trump economic adviser Stephen Moore explained what's driving the latest Republican push to repeal Obamacare. 'People want insurance for their own families, not for other people's families.' What a compassionate man. It's all summed up in his new line of greeting cards. 'Happy birthday, grandma. If we weren't related, I'd leave you to die.' Based on a true story."

James Corden: "It was revealed today that Donald Trump is using campaign donations and money from the Republican National Committee to help pay for his legal fees tied to the Russia investigation. ... Trump using the campaign funds is not illegal, but an unprecedented move by a sitting President, and we all know how Trump feels about anything unprecedented. He feels it's hard to spell."

Trevor Noah: "I don't know if you've ever driven from Maryland to Pennsylvania, but it's like, 'Nice road. We're in a new state, we're in a new state, honey.' Now imagine instead of car, that's your kidney. Like seriously, the states are going to control it. What if you live in New Jersey? Now Chris Christie is controlling your access to healthcare, the same guy who wouldn't even give people access to the beach."

Trevor Noah: "What kind of hole puncher thinks maternity care isn't essential? Every human being at some point needed maternity care. We were all born, even Ted Cruz, all of us."

Jimmy Fallon: "Well, today is the third day of the UN General Assembly, or as Trump calls it, boring Epcot. There's no rides. No monorail."

Jimmy Fallon: "During a speech today, Trump mispronounced the African nation of Namibia, and instead called it Nambia. Then Trump corrected himself, and said, 'Sorry, I meant Narnia.'"

Jimmy Fallon: "President Trump also talked about the possibility of peace in the Middle East, and said that stranger things have happened. He said, 'For example, me.'"

Seth Meyers: "During Melania Trump's UN speech today, she spoke out against bullying, and then her husband took the stage to give the rebuttal."

Seth Meyers: "During the same speech, Melania Trump encouraged the next generation to live by the golden rule, which I think she and Donald take literally."

Seth Meyers: "In a new interview, former Secretary of State John Kerry did not rule out running for President in 2020, because who better to lose to our worst President than the guy who lost to our old worst President?"

Conan O'Brien: "Not everyone having a good time right now. Trump had a little misstep in his speech today. ... During a speech to African leaders today, President Trump accidentally made up the Nambia. Even worse, he promised to help Nambia in their war with Narnia."

Conan O'Brien: "Yesterday. Attorney General Jeff Sessions visited Portland, Oregon. After his visit, Sessions said, 'You know, dreadlocks aren't so scary when they're on a white guy.'"

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